## Short Stories by the World's Greatest Writers

CHAPTER I



WAS nearly midnight of Christmas Eve on Oakland Plantation. In the library of the great house a dim lamp burned, and here, in a big armchair before a waning fire, Evelyn Bruce, a fair young girl, sat earnestly talking to a withered old black woman, who sat on the rug at her feet.

"An' yer say de plantatiom done sol', baby, an' we boun' ter move?" "Yes, mammy, the old

place must go.' "An' is de 'Onerble Mr. Citified buyed it, baby? I know he an' ole marster sot up all endurin' las' night a-

talkin' and a-figgurin'." "Yes. Mr. Jacobs has closed the mortgage, and owns the place now." "An' when is we gwine,

baby? "The sooner the better. I wish the going were over."

"An' whar'bouts is we gwine, honey?" "We will go to the city, mammy-to New Orleans. Something tells me that father will never be able to attend to business again, and I am going to work-to

make money." Mammy fell backward. "W-w-w-work! Y-y-you w-w-work! Wh-wh-why, baby, what sort o' funny, cuyus way is you a-talkin', anyhow?"

"Many refined women are earning their living in the city, mammy." "Is you a-talkin' sense, baby, ur is yer des a-bluffin'?

Is yer axed yo' pa yit?" "I don't think father is well, mammy. He says that whatever I suggest we will do, and I am sure it is best. We will take a cheap little house, father and I-"

'Y-y-you an' yo' pa! An' wh-wha-what 'bout me, baby?" Mammy would stammer when she was excited. 'And you, mammy, of course."

"Umh! umh! ymh! An' so we gwine ter trabble! An' de 'Onerble Mr. Citified done closed de morgans on us! Ef-ef I'd 'a' knowed it dis mornin' when he was a-quizzifyin' me so sergacious, I b'lieve I'd o' upped an' sassed 'im, I des couldn't 'a' helt in. I 'lowed he was teckin' a mighty frien'ly intruss, axin' me do we-all's puckon trees bear big puckons, an'-an' ef de well keep cool all summer, an'-an' he ax me-he ax me--

"What else did he ask you, mammy?" "Scuze me namin' it ter yer, baby, but he ax me who was buried in we's graves-he did fur a fac'. Yer reck'n dee gwine claim de graves in de morgans, baby?"

Mammy had crouched again at Evelyn's feet, and her eager brown face was now almost against her knee. "All the land is mortgaged, mammy."

"Don't yer reck'n he mought des nachelly scuze de graves out'n de morgans, baby, ef yer ax 'im mannerly?" "I'm afraid not, mammy, but after a while we may

The old bronze clock on the mantel struck 12.

"Des listen. De ole clock a-strikin' Chris'mas gif' now. Come 'long, go ter bed, honey. You needs a res', but I ain' gwine to sleep none, 'caze all dis heah news what you been a-tellin' me, hit's gwine ter run roun' in my head all night, same as a buzz saw."

And so they passed out, mammy to her pallet in Evelyn's room, while the sleepless girl stepped to her father's

Entering on tiptoe, she stood and looked upon his face. He s'ept as peacefully as a babe. The anxious look of care which he had worn for years had passed away, and the flickering fire revealed the ghost of a smile upon his placed face. In this it was that Evelyn read the truth. risis of effort for him was past. He might follow, but he would lead no more.

Since the beginning of the war Colonel Bruce's history had been the oft-told tale of loss and disaster, and at the opening of each year since there had been a flaring up of hope and expenditure, then a long summer of wavering promise, followed by an inevitable winter of dis-

The old colonel was, both by inheritance and the habit of many successful years, a man of great affairs, and, when the crash came, he was too old to change. When he bought, he bought heavily. He planted for large results. There was nothing petty about him, not even his debts. And now the end had come.

As Evelyn stood gazing upon his handsome, placid face her eyes were blinded with tears. Falling upon her knees at his side, she engaged for a moment in silent prayer, consecrating herself in love to the life which lay before her, and as she rose she kissed his forehead gently and passed to her own room.

On the table at her bedside lay several piles of manuscript, and, as these attracted her, she turned her chair and fell to work sorting them into packages, which she laid carefully away.

Evelyn had always loved to scribble, but only within the last few years had she thought of writing for money that she should need. She had already sent several manuscripts to editors of magazines; but somehow, like birds too young to leave the nest, they all found their way back to her. With each failure, however, she had become more determined to succeed, but in the meantimenow—she must earn a living. This was not practicable here. In the city all things were possible, and to the city she would go. She would at first accept one of the tempthere. In the city all things were possible, and to the city she would go. She would at first accept one of the tempting situations offered in the daily papers, improving her leisure by attending lectures, studying, observing, cultivating herself in every possible way, and, after a time, she would try her hand again at writing.

It was nearly day when she finally went to bed, but she was up early next morning. There was much to be considered. Many things were to be done.

At first she consulted her father about everything, but his invariable answer, "Just as you say, daughter," transferred all responsibility to her.

A letter to her mother's old New Orleans friend, Madame Le Duc, briefly set forth the circumstances, and asked madame's aid in securing a small house. Other

Madame Le Duc, briefly set forth the circumstances, and asked madame's aid in securing a small house. Other letters sent in other directions arranged various matters, and Evelyn soon found herself in the vortex of a move. She had a wise, clear head and a steady, resolute hand, and in old mammy a most capable servant. The old woman seemed to forget nothing, as she bustled about, packing, suggesting, and, spite of herself, frequently protesting; for, if the truth must be spoken, this move to the city was violating all the traditions of mammy's life. "Wh-wh-wh-why, baby! Not teck de grimestone!" she exclaimed one day, in reply to Evelyn's protest agrinst her packing that penderous article. "How is we gwine sharpen de spade an' de grubbin' hoe ter work in gwine sharpen de spade an' de grubbin' hoe ter work in

We sha'n't have a garden, mammy. "We sha'n't have a garden, mammy."
"No gyard'n!" Mammy sat down upon the grindstone in disguet. "Wh-wh-wh-what sort o' a fureign no-groun' place is we gwine ter. anyhow, baby? Honey," she continued, in a troubled voice. "co'se you know I ain't got educatiom, an' I ain't claim knowledge; b-b-b-but ain't you better study on it good 'fo' we goes ter dis heah new country? Dee tells me de cidy's a owdacious place. I beea heern a heap o' tales, but I 'ain't say nothin'. Is yer done prayed over it good, baby?"
"Yes, dear. I have prayed that we should do only right. What have you heard, mammy?"

right. What have you heard, mammy?"

"D-d-d-de way folks talks, look like death an' terror is des a-layin' roun loose in the cidy. Dee tell me dat ef yer des nachelly blows out yer light ter go ter bed, dat dis heah some h'n' what stan' fur wick, hit'll des keep a-sizzin' an' a-sizzin' out, des like sperityal steam;

an' hit's clair pizen!"

"That is true, mammy. But, you see, we won't blow it out. We'll know better."

"Does yer snuff it out wid snuffers, baby, ur des fling it en de flo' an' tromp yer foots on it?"

"Neither, mammy. The gas comes in through pipes built into the houses, and is turned on and off with a valve, comewhat as we let water out of the refrigerator."

"Um-hm! Well done! Of co'se! On'y, in place o' water what put out de light, hit's in'ardly filled wid some'n'n' what favor a blaze."

"Exactly."

Mammy reflected a moment. "But de grimestone."

"Exactly."

Mammy reflected a moment. "But de grimestone gotter stay berhime, is she? An' is we gwine leave all de gyard'n tools an' implemers ter de 'Onerble Mr. Citified?"

No, mammy; none of the appurtenances of the homestead are mortgaged. We must sell them. We need money, you know."

What is de impertinences o' de homestid, baby? You forgits I ain't on'erstan' book words."
"Those things intended for family use, mammy. There are the carriage horses, the cows, the chickens—"
"Bless goodness fur dat! An' who gwine drive 'em
inter de cidy fur us, honey?"

"Oh, mammy, we must sell them all."

Mammy was almost crying. "An' what sort o' entry is we gwine meek inter de cidy, honey—empty-handed, same as po' white trash? D-d-d-don't yer reck'n we b-b-better teck de chickens, haby? Yo' ma thunk a heap o' dem Brahma hens an' dem Clymouth Rockers—dee hooks so courageous."

## "BLINK"

By Ruth McEnery Stuart

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It was hard for Evelyn to refuse. Mammy loved everything on the old place.

"Let us give up these things now, mammy; and, after a while, when I grow rich and famous, I'll buy you all the chickens you want."

At last preparations were over. They were to start on the morrow. Mammy had just returned from a last tour through outbuildings and gardens, and was evidently

"Honey," she began, throwing herself on the step at Evelyn's feet, "what yer reck'n? Ole Muffly is a-sett'n' on fo'teen eggs down in de cottonseed. W-w-we can't g'way f'm heah an' leave Muffly a-sett'n, hit des nachelly can't be did. D-d-don't yer reck'n dee'd hol' back de morgans a little, till Muffly git done sett'n' ?"

It was the same old story, Mammy would never be ready to go.

"But our tickets are bought, mammy." "An' like as not de 'Onerble Mr. Citified'll shoo ole Muffly orf de Les' an' spile de whole sett'n'. Tut! tut! tut!" And, groaning in spirit, mammy walked off.

Evelyn had feared, for her father, the actual moment of leaving, and was much relieved when, with his now habitual tranquillity, he smilingly assisted both her and mammy into the sleeper. Instead of entering himself, however, he hesitated.

"Isn't your mother com ing, daughter?" he asked looking backward. "Oh-e oh, I forgot" he added. quickly. "She has gone on

before hasu't she?" "Yes, dear she has gone before," Evelyn answered, hardly knowing what she said, the chill of a new ter-

ror upon her What did this mean? Was it possible that she had read but half the truth? Was her father's mind not only enfeebled but going?

Mammy had not heard the question, and so Evelyn bore her anxiety alone, and, during the day, her anxious eyes were often upon her father's face, but he only smiled and kept silent.

They had been traveling all day, when suddenly, above the rumbling of the train, a weak, birdlike chirp was heard faint, but distinct; and presently it came again, a protonged

Heads went up, inquiring faces peered up and down the coach, and fell again to paper or book, when the cry came a third time, and

Mammy's face was a study. "'Sh-'sh-'sh! don' say nothin' baby," she whispered in Evelyn's ear; "but dis heah chicken in my bosom is a-ticklin' me so can hardly set still.'

Evelyn was absolutely speechless with surprise, as mammy continued by snatches her whispered explanation:

"Des 'fo' we lef' I went 'n' lif' up ole Mutfly ter see how de eggs was comin' orn, an' dis heah egg was pipped out, an' de little risindenter look like he eyed me so berseechin' I des nachelly couldn't leave 'im. Look like he knowed he warn't righteously in de morgans, an' 'e crave ter clair out an' trabble. It did hope speech wouldn't come ter 'im tell we got off'n deze train kyars."

A halt at a station brought a momentary silence, and right here arose again, clear and shrill, the chicken's cry. Mammy was equal to the

emergency. After glancing inquiringly up and down the coach, she exclaimed, aloud: "Some'h'n in dis heah kyar soun' des like a vintrillo-

"That's just what it is," said an old gentleman opposite, peering around over his spectacles, "And who

his spectacles. "And whoever you are, sir, you've been atousing yourself for an hour."

Mammy's ruse had succeeded, and during the rest of the journey, although the chicken developed duly as to vocal powers, the only question asked by the curious was:

"Who can the ventriloquist be?"

Evelyn could hardly maintain her self-central the sits. evelyn could hardly maintain her self-centrol, the situation was so utterly absurd.

"I does hope it's a pullet." mammy confided later; but I doubts it. Hit done struck out wid a mannish movemint a'ready. Muffly's eggs allus hatches out sech invigrous chickens. I gwine in the dressin' room, baby, an' wrep 'im up ag'in. Feel like he done kicked 'isse'f loose."

an' wrep 'im up ag in. Feel like he done kicked 'isse'f loose."

Though she made several trips to the dressing room in the interest of her hatchling, mammy's serene face held no betrayal of the disturbing secret of her bosom.

At last the journey was over. The train crept with a tired motion into the noisy depot. Then came a rattling ride over cobblestones, granite and unpayed streets: a sudden halt before a low-browed cottage; a smiling old lady stepping out to meet them: a slam at the front door—they were at home in New Orleans.

Madame Le Duc seemed to have forgotten nothing that their comfort required, and in many ways that the creole gentlewoman understands so well she was affectectionately and unobtrusively kind. And yet, in the life Evelyn was seeking to enter, madame could give her no aid. About all these new ideas of women—ladies—going out as breadwinners, madame knew nothing. For twenty years she had gone only to the cathedral, the French Market, the cemetery and the Chapei of St. Roche. As to all this unconventional American city above Canal street, it was there and spreading (like the measles and other evils); everybody said so; even her paper, L'Abeille, referred to it in French—resentfully. She believed in it historically; but for herself, she "never traveled," as she quaintly put it, in her "acquaintances"—the French streets with which she was familiar.

The house she had selected was a typical old-fash-toned French cottage, venerable in scaling plaster and

she quaintly put it, in her "acquaintances"—the French streets with which she was familiar.

The house she had selected was a typical old-fashioned French cottage, venerable in scaling plaster and fern-tufted tile roof, but cool and roomy within as uninviting without. A small inland garden surprised the eye as one entered the battened gate at its side, and a dormer window in the roof looked out upon the rigging of ships at anchor but a stone's throw away.

Here, to the chamber above, Evelyn led her father. Furnishing this large upper room with familiar objects and pointing out the novelties of the view from its window, she tried to interpret his new life happily for him, and he smiled and seemed content.

It was surprising to see how soon mammy fell into line with the changed order of things. The French Market, with its "cuyus fureign folks an' mixed talk." was a panorama of daily unfolding wonders to her. "But huccome dee calls it French?" she exclaimed one day. "I been listenin' good, an' I hear 'em jabber, jabber jabber all dey fanciful lingoes, but I 'ain't heern nair one say poily fronsay, an' yit I knows dats de riverend book French." The Indian squaws in the market, sitting flat on the ground, surrounded by their wares, she held in special contempt. "I holds myse'f clair 'bove a Injun," she boasted. "Dee ain't look jinnywine ter me. Dee ain't nuther white folk nur niggers, nair one. Sett'n' deeselves up fir go-hetweens, an' sellin' sech grass greens as we lef' berhindt us growin' in de wilderness!"

But one unfailing source of pleasure to mammy was the little chicken, "Blink," who, she declared. "named

lef' berhindt us growin' in de wilderness!"
But one unfailing source of pleasure to mammy was the little chicken, "Blink," who, she declared. "named 'isse'! Blink de day he blinked at me so cunnin' out'n de shell. Blink 'ain't said nothing' wid 'is mouf," she continued, eyeing him proudly, "caze he know eye speech set on a chicken a heap better'n human words, mo' inspecial on a yo'ng half-hatched chicken like Blink was dat day, cramped wid de eggsheil behime an' de morgans starin'

'im in de face befo', an' not knowin' how he gwine come out'n his trouble. He des kep' silence, an' wink all 'is argimints, an' 'e wink to the p'int, toe!"

In spite of his unique entrance into the world and his precarlous journey, Blink was a vigorous young chicken, with what mammy was pleased to call "a good proud step an' knowin' eyes."

Three months passed. The long, dull summer was appreaching, and yet Evelyn had found no regular employment. She had not been idle. Sewing for the market folk, decorating palmetto fans and Easter eggs, which mammy peddled in the big houses, she had earned small sums of money from time to time. In her enforced leisure she found opportunity for study, and her picturesque surroundings were as an open book.

Impressions of the quaint old French and Spanish city, with its motley population, were carefully jotted down in her notebook. These first descriptions she afterward rewrote, discarding weakening detail, elaborating the occasional triviality which seemed to reflect the true local tint-a nice distinction, involving conscientious hard work. How she longed for criticism and advice!

A year ago her father, now usually dozing in his chair while she worked, would have been a most able and affectionate critic; but now -- She rejoiced when a day passed without his asking for her mother, and won-

"You Heah Me, Blirk! Open Yo' Mouf, an' Crow Out, Like a Man!"

CHAPTER II

reads orf, des like a passon 'magine some'h'n' what ain't so."

had just come back, returned from an editor. Evelyn had been trying to discover wherein its weakness lay.

Mammy had caught the truth. The story was unreal. The English seemed good, the construction fair, but—it. was "fanciful."

this, and read another manuscript aloud.
"I tell yer, honey, a-a-a pusson 'd know you had educatiom, de way you e'n fetch in de dictionary words."
"Don't you understand them, mammy?" she asked,

"Don't you understand them, mammy?" she asked, quickly, catching another idea.

"Who, me? Law, baby, I don't crave ter on'erstan' all dat granjer. I des ketches de chune, an' hit sho is got a giorified ring."

Here was a valuable hint. She must simplify her style. The tide of popular writing was, she knew, in the other direction, but the best writing was simple.

The suggestion sent her back to study.

And how for her own improvement she rewrote the

And now for her own improvement she rewrote the "story of big words" in the simplest English she could command, bidding mammy tell her if there was one word the could not understand.

In the transition the spirit of the story was necessarily observed but the conference of the story was necessarily observed but the conference of the story was necessarily observed but the conference of the story was necessarily observed but the conference of the story was necessarily observed but the conference of the story was necessarily observed but the conference of the story was necessarily observed but the conference of the story was necessarily observed but the conference of the story was necessarily observed but the story

sarily changed, but the exercise was good. Mammy un-

derstood every word.

"But, baby," she protested, with a troubled face, "look like hit don't stan' no mo'; all its granjer done gone. You better fix it up des like it was befo', honey. Hit 'minds me o' some o' deze heah fine folks what walks de streets.

You know folks what 'ain't got nothin' else, dee des nachelly 'bleege ter put on finery.'

How clover mamniy was! How wholesome the unconscious satire of her criticism! This story, shorn of its grandeur, could not stand, indeed. It was weak and affected

know how you are helping me."

"Gord knows I wishes I could holp you, honey. I ain't nuver is craved education hefo', but now, look like I'd like ter be king of all de smartness, an' know all dey is in de books. I wouldn't hol' back noth'a' fom

yer, bahy."

And Evelyn knew if was true.

"Look ter me, baby," mammy suggested another night, after listening to a highly imaginative story—
"look ter me like ef—ef—ef you'd des write down some truly truth what is ac-chilly happened, an' glorify it wid education, hit'd des nachelly stan' in a book."

I've been thinking of that," said Evelyn, reflectively, laving aside her manuscript.

"How does this sound, mammy?" she asked, a week later, when, taking up an unfinished tale, she began to

read.

It was the story of their own lives, dating from the sale of the plantation. The names, of course, were changed, excepting Blink's, and, indeed, until he appeared upon the scene, although mammy listened breathless, she did not recognize the characters. Blink, however, was unmistakable, and when he announced himself from the old woman's bosom, his identity flashed upon

laying aside her manuscript.

You dear old mammy," exclaimed Evelyn, "you don't

'A pusson would know dat was fanciful de way hit

Such was mammy's first criticism of a story which

The criticism set Evelyn to thinking. She laid aside

surprise, but it was even so.

mammy, and she tumbled over on the floor, laughing and crying alternately. Evelyn had written from her heart, and the story, simply told, held all the wrench of parting with old associations, while the spirit of courage and hope which animated her breathed in every line as she described their entrance upon their new life.

"My heart was teched f'om de fus't, baby," said mammy, presently, wiping her eyes; "b-b-b-but took heah, honey, I'd-I'd be wuss'n a hycoprite ef I let dat noble ole black 'oman, de way you done specified 'er, stan' fur me. Y-y-yer got ter change all dat, honey. Dey warn't nothin' on top o' dis roun' worl' what fetched me 'long wid y' all but 'cep' 'caze I des nachelly love yer, an' all dat book granjer what you done laid on me I den' know nothin' 't all about it, an' yer got ter peck it orf, an' write me down like I is, des a po' ole nigger wha' done tell in wid de Gord-blessedes' white folks wha' ever lived on dis earth, an'-an' wha' gwine foller 'em an' stay hy 'em, don' keer which-a-way dee go, so long as 'er ole han's is able ter holp 'em. Yer got ter change all dat, honey.

"But Blink! De laws-o'-mussy! Maybe hit's 'caze I been hatched 'im an' raised 'im, but look ter me like he ain't no disgrace ter de story, no way. Seem like he sets orf de book. Yer ain't gwine say nothin' 'bout Blink bein' a frizzly, is yer? 'Twouldn't do no good ter tell it on 'im.'

"I didn't know it, mam-

"Yes, indeedy. Pe' Blink's feathers done taken on a secon' twis'." She spoke with maternal solicitude. "I d' known huccome he come dat-a-way, 'caze we ain't nuver is had no frizzly stock 'mongst our chickens. Sometimes I b'lieve Blink tumbled 'isse'f up dat-a-way tryin' ter wriggle 'isse'f out'n de morgans. I hates it mightily. Look like a frizzly can't put on granjer no way, don' keer how mannerly 'e hol' 'isse'f."

The pregress of the new story, which mammy considered under her especial supervision, was now her engrossing thought.

"Yer better walk straight. Blink," she would exclaim-"yer better walk straight an' in a book, honey, 'long wid de aristokercy!"

One day Blink walked leisurely in from the street, returning, happily for mammy's piece of mind, before he had been missed. He raised his wings a moment as he entered, as if pleased

shruggin' yo' shoulders at all nights an' nussed de ole 'oman time she was sick, an' me, Blink, an' puttin' on no -an'-an' de way she sew all de ele 'oman's eloze; an'her arms. "Is you crave ter learn fureign speech, Blinky, like de res' o' dis mixedtalkin' settlemint? Is you 'shamed o' yo' country voice, honey, an' tryin' ter ketch a French crow? No. he ain't," she added, putting him down at last, but watching him fondly. "Blink know he's a Bruce. An' he know he's folks is in tribulatiom, an' hilarity ain't become 'im -dat's huccome Blink 'ain't crowed none-ain't it, Blink?" And Blink wisely winked his knowing eyes. That he had, indeed, never proclaimed his roosterhood crowing was a source of some anxiety to mammy. "Maybe Blink don't know

"Maybe Blink don't know he's a rooster," she confided to Evelyn one day. "Sho 'nough, honey, he nuver is seen none! De neares' ter 'isse'f what he knows is dat ole green polly what set in de fig tree nex' do', an' talk Gascon. I seed Blink 'istidday stan' an' look at 'im. au' den look down at 'isse'f.

day stan' an' look at 'im, an' den look down at 'isse'f, same as ter say, 'Is I a polly, or what?' An' den 'e open an' shet 'is mouf, like 'e tryin' ter twis' it, polly fashion, an' hit won't twis', an' den 'e des shaken 'is head, an' walk orf, like 'e heavy hearted an' mixed in 'is mind. Blink don't know what 'spornsibility lay on 'im ter keep our courage up. You heah me, Blink! Open yo' mouf, an' crow out, like a man!"

age up. You heah me, Blink! Open yo' mouf, an' crow out, like a man!"

But Blink was biding his time.

During this time, in spite of strictest economy, money was going out faster than it came in

"I tell ver what I been thinkin', baby," said mammy, as she and Evelyn discussed the situation. "I think de bes' thing you can do is ter hire me out. I can cook you all's breckfus' soon, an' go cut an' make day's work, an' come home plenty o' time ter cock de little speck o' dinner you an' ole boss needs."

"Oh, no, no! You mustn't think of it, mammy."

"But what we gwine do, baby? We des can't get out'n money, Hit won't do!"

"Maybe I should have taken that position as lady's companion, mammy."

companion, mammy."
"An' stay 'way all nights f'om yo' pa, when you de onlies' light ter 'is eyes? No, no, honey!"
"Ent 't has been my only offer, and sometimes I

think—"
"Hush talkin' dat-a-way, baby. Don't yer pray? An' don't yer trus' Gord? An' ain't yer done walked de streets tell you mos' drapped down, lookin', fur work? An' can't yer teck de hint dat de Lord done laid off yo' work right heah in the house? You go 'long now, an' cheer up yo' pa, des like you been doin', an' study yo' books, an' write down true joy an' true sorrer in yo' stories, an' glorify Gord wid yo' sense, an' don't pester yo'se'f 'hout today an', tomorrer, an'—an'—an' ef de gorspil is de trufe, an'—an' ef a po' ole nigger's prayers mounts ter heaven on de wings o' faith, Gord ain't gwine let a hair o' yo' head perish."

But mammy pondered in her heart much concerning the financial outlook, and it was on the day after this conversation that she dressed herself with unusual care, and, without announcing her errand, started out.

and, without announcing her errand, started out.

Her return soon brought its own explanation, however, for upon her old head she bore a huge bundle of unlaundered clothing.

"What in the world!" exclaimed Evelyn: but before.

"What in the world!" exclaimed Evelyn: but before a she could voice a protest, mammy interrupted her.

"Nuver you mind, baby! I des waked up," sne exclaimed, throwing her bundle at the kitchen door, "I been preachin' ter you 'bout teckin' hints, an' 'ain't been readin' my own lesson. Huccome we got dis heah nice sunny backyard, an' gis bustin' cisternful o' rannwater? Huccome de boa'din'-house folks at de corner keeps a-passin' an' a-passin' by dis gate wid all dey fluted finery on, ef 'twarn't ter gimme a hint dat dey's wealth a-layin' at de do', an' me, bline as a bat, 'ain't seen it?"

"Oh, but, mammy, you can't take in washing. You are too old; it is too hard. You mustn't—"

"Ef-ef-ef-ef you gits obstropulous, I-I-I gwine whup yer, sho. Y-y-yer know how much money's a-comin' out'n dat bundle, baby? Five doilars!" This in a stage whisper. "An' not a speck o' dirt on nothin'; des baby caps an lace doin's rumpled up."

whisper. "An' not a speck o' dirt on nothin'; des baby caps an' lace doin's rumpied up."

"How did you manage it, man;my?"

"Well, baby, I des put on my fluted ap'on—an' you know it's froned purty—an' my clair-starched neck-hankcher, an'—an' my business face, an' I helt up my head an' walked in, an' axed good prices, an' de ladies, dee des tooken took one good look at me, an' gimme all I'd carry. You know washin' an' ironin' is my pleasure, baby."

It was useless to protest, and so, after a moment, Evelyn began rolling up her sleeves.
"I am going to help you, mammy," she said, quietly but firmly; but before she could protest, mammy had

gathered her into her arms, and carried her into her own room. Setting her down at her desk, she ex-

"Now, ef you goes fer de washtub, dey ain't nothin' lef' fur me ter, do but 'cep'n' ter set down an' write de story, an' you know I can't do it."

"But, mammy, I must help you." "Is you gwine meck me whup yer, whe'r ur no. baby? Now I gwine meck a bargain wid yer. You set down an' write, an' I gwine play de planner on de washboa'd, an' tonight you can read off what yer done put down, an' ef yer done written it purty an' sweet, you can come an' turn de flutin' machine fur me termorrer. Yer gwine meck de bargain wid me, baby?"

Evelyn was so touched that she had not voice to answer. Rising from her seat, she put her arms around mammy's neck and kissed her old face, and as she turned away a tear rolled down her cheek. And so the "bargain" as sealed.

Before going to her desk Evelyn went to her father to see that he wanted nothing. He sat, as usual, gazing silently out of the window,

"Daughter," said he, as she entered, "are we in France?"

"No, dear," she answered, startled at the question. "But the language I hear in the street is French; and see the ship masts-French flags flying. But there is the German, too, and the English, and last week there was a Scandinavian. Where are we truly, daughter? My surroundings confuse me."

"We are in New Orleans, father-in the French Quarter, Ships from almost everywhere come to this port, you know. Let us walk out to the levee this morning and see the men-o'-war in the river. The air will revive you.'

"Well, if your mother comes. She might come while we were away."

And so it was always. With her heart trembling within her, Evelyn went to her desk. "Surely," she thought, "there is much need that I shall do my best." Almost reverentially she took up her per. as she proceeded with the true story she had begun.

"I done changed my min' 'bout dat ole 'oman wha' stan' fur me, baby," said mammy that night. "You leave 'er des like she is. She glorifies de story a heap better'n my nachel self could do it. I been a-thinkin' 'bout it, an' de finer that ole 'oman ac', an' de mo granjer yer lay on 'er, de better yer gwine meck de book, 'caze de ole gemplum wha' stan' fur ole marsier, his timos an' seasons is done past, an' pe can't do nothin' but set still an' wait, an'-an' de vo's missus, she ain't fiften ter wrastle on de outskirts; slie 'Na't nothin' but 'cep' des a levin' sweet saint, wid 'er face set ter a high, far

"Hush, mammy!" 'I'm a-talkin' 'bout de book, baby, an' don't you interrup' me no mo'! An' I say ef dis ole 'oman wha' stan' fur me, ef-ef-ef she got a weak spot in 'er, dey won't be no story to it. She de one wha' got ter stan' by de battlemints an' hol' de fort."

"That's just what you are doing, mammy. There isn't a grain in her that is finer than you." 'Sh! dis ain't no time fur foolishness, baby. Yer 'ain't said nothin' 'bout yo' ma an' de ole black 'oman's step high, 'caze yer gwine baby bein' borned de same day, is yer? An' how de ele 'oman nussed 'em bofe des like twins? An'-en' how folks

'cused 'er o' starvin' 'er own baby on de 'count o' yo' ma bein' puny? (But dat warn't true.) Maybe yer better leave all dat out, 'caze hit mought spile de story." "How could it spoil it, mammy?" "Don't yer see, ef folks knowed dat dem white folks an' dat ole black 'oman was dat close-t, dey wouldn't he no principle in it. Dey ain't nothin' but love in dat, an' de ale 'oman couldn't he'p 'erse'f, no mo'n I could to get home, and mammy he'p it! No right-minded pusson is gwine ter deny dey exclaimed, as she burst out own heart. Yer better leave all dat out, honey. B-b-but deys some h'n' else wha' been lef' out, wha' b'long in de "Don't yo' come in heah book. Yer 'ain't named de way de little mistus sot up

French airs. I believe Blink an'-an' yer done lef' out a heap o' de purtiness an' de been out teckin' French les- sweetness o' de yo'ng mistus! Dis is a book, baby, an'sons.' She took her pet into an'-yer boun' ter do jestice!" In this fashion the story was written. "And what do you think I am going to do with it,

maminy?" said Evelyn, when finally, having done her very best, she was willing to call it finished. "Yer know some'h'n', baby. Ei-ef-ef I had de money. look like I'd buy that story myse'f. Seem some way 'ike I loves it. Co'se I couldn't read it; but my min' been on it so long, seem like, ef I'd study de pages good dee'd open up ter me. What yer gwine do wid it, baby?"

"Oh, mammy, I can hardly tell you! My heart seems in my throat when I dare to think of it; but I'm going to try it. A New York magazine has offered \$500 for a best story-\$300! Think, mammy, what it would do for us!

"Dat wouldn't buy de plantation back, would it, .baby?" Mammy had no conception of large sums.

"We don't want it back, mamniy. It would pay for moving our dear ones to graves of their own; we should put a nice sum in bank; you shouldn't do any more washing; and, if we can write one good story, you know, we can write more. It will be only a beginning."

"An' I tell yer what I gwine do. I gwine pray over it good, des like I been doin' f'om de start, an' ef hit's Gord's will, dem folks'll be moved in de sperit ter sen' 'long de money," And so the story was sent.

After it was gone the atmosphere seemed brighter. The pending decision was now a fixed point to which all their hopes were directed. The very audacity of the effort seemed inspiration to

more ambitious work; and during the long summer, while in her busy hands the fluting machine went round and round, Evelyn's mind was full of plans for the fu-Finally, December, with its promise of the momentous decision, was come, and Evelyn found herself full

of anxious misgivings.

What merit entitling it to special consideration had the little story? Did it bear the impress of self-forgetful, conscientious purpose, or was this a thing only feebly struggling into life within herself—not yet the compelling force that indelibly stamps itself upon the earnest labor of consecrated hands? How often in the silent hours of night did she ask herself questions like these!

At last it was Christmas Eve again, and Saturday night. When the days are dark, what is so depressing as an anniversary—an anniversary ioyous in its very

night. When the days are dark, what is so depressing as an anniversary—an anniversary joyous in its very essence? How one Christmas brings in its train memory-pictures of those gone before!

This has been a hard day for Evelyn. Her heart felt weak within her, and yet, realizing that she alone represented youth and hope in the little household, and feeling need that her own courage should be sustained, she had been more than usually merry all day. She had clandestinely prepared little surprises for her father and mammy, and was both amused and touched to discover the old woman secreting mysterious little parcels which she knew were to come to her in the morning.

"Wouldn't it be funny if, after all, I should turn out to be only a good washerwoman, mammy?" she said, laughing, as she assisted the old woman in pinning up a

laughing, as she assisted the old woman in pinning up a basket of laundered clothing.
"Hit'd be funnier yit ef I'd turn out inter one o' deze "Hit'd be funnier yit ef I'd turn out inter one o' deze heah book-writers, wouldn't it?" And mammy laughed heartily at her own joke. "Look like I better study my a-h abs fus', let 'lone puttin' 'em back on paper wid a pen. I tell you education's a sp-spreadin' in dis fam'ly, sho. Time Blink run over de sheet out a-bleachin' 'istiddy, he written a Chinese letter all over it. Didn't you, Blink? What de matter wid Blink anyhow, today?"

you, Blink? What de matter wid Blink anyhow, today?" she added, taking the last pin from her head-kerchief. "Blink look like he nervous some way dis evenin'. He keep a-walkin' roun', an' winkin' so slow, an' retchin' his neck out de back-do' so cuyus. Stop a-battin' yo' eyes at me, Blink! Ef yo' got some'h'n ter say, say it!" A sudden noisy rattle of the iron door-knocker-

mammy trotting to the door-the postman-a letter! It

mammy trotting to the door—the postman—a letter! It all happened in a minute.

How Evelyn's heart throbbed and her hand trembled as she opened the envelope! "Oh, mammy." she cried, trembling now like an aspen leaf. "Thank God!"

"Is dee d-d-done sent de money, baby?" Her old face was twitching too.

But Evelyn could not answer. Nodding her head, she fell sobbing on her mammy's shoulder.

Mammy raised her apron to her eyes, and there's no telling what "foolishness" she might have committed had it not been that suddenly, right at her side, arose a most jubilant screech.

had it not been that suddenly, right at her side, arose a most jubilant screech.

Blink, perched on the handle of the ciothesbasket, was crowing with all his might.

Evelyn, startled, raised her head, and laughed through her tears, while mammy threw herself at full length upon the floor, shouting aloud.

"Tell me chickens 'ain't got secon'-sight! Blink see'd—he see'd—laws-o-mussy, baby, look yonder at lat little yaller rooster stan'in' on de fence. Dat what Blink see. Co'se it is!"

